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SUCCESS STORY

Improved Farming Techniques Increase More than Productivity and Income



Photo: NEAT

Sita Rana Magar and her son displaying cauliflower she grew with USAID support in her farm in Masyam, Palpa.

“In the past, I could only produce 224 kg of rice on two ropani (1,000 sq. m.), with the value of 4,000 NRs. But now, I produce so much cauliflower and tomato that my income has increased to 40,000 NRs. That is 10 times more from the same land.”

**- Sita Rana Magar,
Masyam, Palpa**

U.S. Agency for International Development
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The farmers in the Masyam VDC in Palpa face a host of challenges. Located roughly four kilometers from the nearest road and with poor irrigation, the sloped, dry land has low productivity of food crops. As a result, the residents, most of whom are indigenous *dalits*, suffer from poverty and food shortages. One such farmer, Sita Rana Magar, struggled each year to feed her family of five with the production and earnings from her rice crop.

The USAID-funded Nepal Economic, Agriculture, and Trade (NEAT) Activity is working to address food insecurity and increase incomes of farmers like Sita by introducing improved inputs and technical training.

NEAT field technicians suggested that Sita cultivate high-value crops that were in demand at the local market. NEAT provided improved tomato and cauliflower seed on a cost-share basis, as well as a training package on topics including nursery management, transplanting, fertilizer use, weeding, irrigation, drainage, integrated pest management, and post harvest techniques. Sita planted her crops and strictly followed the instructions provided by NEAT technicians. Sita was amazed with the results. *“In the past, I could only produce 224 kg of rice on two ropani (1,000 sq. m.), with the value of 4,000 NRs. But now, I produce so much cauliflower and tomato that my income has increased to 40,000 NRs. That is 10 times more from the same land.”*

With her increased income, she was able to pay off a 20,000 NRs. loan to the local cooperative that she had taken out to buy food and pay school fees for her children. In addition, she was able to invest 15,000 NRs. to construct a bathroom in her home. According to Sita, NEAT significantly improved her life. *“I have no debt to pay and no problem of living hand to mouth.”*

The increase in productivity and income has also increased Sita's confidence. With NEAT support, Sita is now planning to cultivate off-season vegetables and construct a plastic pond to collect water for irrigation. Seeing her success, several of her neighbors are also planning to try commercial vegetable farming following NEAT's technical instructions.